

REMARKS

I. Introduction

This Amendment is a full and timely response to the non-final Office Action of May 3, 2005.

Upon entry of the present amendment, claims 1 and 3-31 will be pending in this application. Claim 1 has been amended, and claim 2 has been canceled. No new matter has been added. The Applicant sincerely believes that after entry of the amendments discussed herein the application is in condition for allowance.

II. Objection to Drawings

The Examiner objected to several of the drawings, namely Figures 2, 3, 6, 8, 9, and 17, for failing to comply with 37 CFR § 1.84(p)(4). Applicant submits herewith corrected drawings in compliance with 37 CFR § 1.84(p)(4). In particular Applicant has modified the drawings as indicated in the following remarks and respectfully asks that the Examiner withdraw this objection.

In Figure 2, reference character "12" has been replaced by reference characters "12A", "12B", . . . , "12N" to designate stations A, B, . . . , N.

In Figure 3, reference character "23" has been replaced by reference characters "23A" and "23B" to designate packet streams A and B.

In Figure 6, reference character “45” has been replaced by reference characters “45A”, “45B”, “45C”, “45D”, “45X”, “45Y”, and “45Z” to designate stations A, B, C, D, X, Y, and Z.

In Figure 6, reference character “42” has been replaced by reference characters “42A” and “42B” to designate the hubs.

In Figure 8, reference character “62” has been replaced by reference characters “62A”, “62B”, . . . , “62N” to designate stations 1, 2, . . . , N. Also, for clarity the station box labeled “N-1” has been deleted and the four dot ellipsis symbol has been replaced by a three dot ellipsis symbol.

In Figure 9, reference character “72” has been replaced by reference characters “72A” and “72B” to designate stations A and B.

In Figure 9, reference character “76” has been replaced by reference characters “76A1”, “76A2”, “76B1”, and “76B2” to designate the OBIM boxes.

In Figure 17, reference character “142” has been replaced by reference characters “142G”, “142A”, “142B”, “142C”, “142D”, “142E”, and “142F” to designate stations G, A, B, C, D, E, and F.

III. Amendments to the Specification

Applicant has amended the specification to make it consistent with the labels utilized on the replacement drawings.

IV. Rejection of Claims 1-7, 12, 26 and 31 under 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Examiner rejected claims 1-7, 12, 26 and 31 under 37 C.F.R. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,434,861 to *Pritty, et al.* Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection. *Pritty et al.* teaches a timed bus access method in which a master node, denoted a “polling master” controls access to the bus through transmission of a series of timing pulses, denoted “slot pulses,” to the nodes (or stations) of the network. Upon receipt of a slot pulse, a node seeking access to the bus waits a predetermined time delay period, which is assigned by the polling master as a function of the node’s assigned place in the access order, and then monitors the bus for activity. If the bus is active, the node sets a “next slot” flag and waits for the next slot pulse to arrive, at which time it repeats the above-described sequence. If the bus is silent when the node monitors it, the node sets a “transmit” flag and begins transmitting its message onto the bus. Once the transmit flags for all nodes of the network have been set, the polling master resets them to the “next slot” state and starts the sequence over. By assigning various time delays to the nodes, the polling master can control the order in which the nodes gain access to the bus. Note however, that a node only gains access to the bus upon 1) receiving a slot pulse and 2) ascertaining that the bus is silent. The slot pulse sequence thus acts a master clock for controlling access to the bus.

Applicant’s claimed invention utilizes a particular node, denoted the starting bus master, to ascertain and assign an access order to the nodes of the network. Unlike *Pritty et al.*, however, the claimed invention does not utilize a master clock sequence to control access to the bus. Once the starting bus master assigns the access order to the nodes, access to the bus is not

synchronized with any external or independent clocking mechanism. Instead, a node gains access to the bus upon receipt of the end of the message of the node immediately preceding it in the assigned order. Thus in the claimed invention, a node does not wait for the arrival of an independent "slot pulse" to gain access to the bus once the previous node in the order has finished transmitting. The Applicant respectfully submits that *Pritty et al.* neither teaches nor suggests each station beginning transmission of its message upon receipt of the end of the message transmitted by the station immediately preceding it in the order as recited in claim 1 as amended herein.

Claims 3-7, 12, 26 and 31 each depend, either directly or indirectly, from claim 1. The Applicant respectfully submits that *Pritty et al.* neither teaches nor suggests all the limitations of claim 1 as amended herein and therefore neither teaches nor suggests that all of the limitations of these dependent claims. Claim 2 has been canceled.

V. Rejection of Claims 25, 27-30 under 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Examiner rejected claims 25, 27-30 under 37 C.F.R. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,434,861 to *Pritty, et al.* in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,358,366 to *Lin*. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection. These claims each depend, either directly or indirectly, from claim 1. Therefore the Applicant respectfully submits that the combination of *Pritty et al.* with *Lin* neither teaches nor suggests all the claimed limitations of these dependent claims.

VI. Rejection of Claims 8-11, 13-20 under 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Examiner rejected claims 8-11, 13-20 under 37 C.F.R. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,434,861 to *Pritty, et al.* in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,732,086 to *Liang*.

Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection. These claims each depend, either directly or indirectly, from claim 1. Therefore the Applicant respectfully submits that the combination of *Pritty et al.* with *Liang* neither teaches nor suggests all the claimed limitations of these dependent claims.

VII. Rejection of Claims 21-24 under 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Examiner rejected claims 21-24 under 37 C.F.R. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,517,622 to *Pritty*. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection. These claims each depend, either directly or indirectly, from claim 1. Therefore the Applicant respectfully submits that *Pritty et al.* neither teaches nor suggests all the claimed limitations of these dependent claims.

Upon entry of the present amendment, claims 1 and 3-31 will be pending in this application.

For the reasons stated above, the Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection and request reconsideration and withdrawal thereof.

CONCLUSION

The foregoing is submitted as a full and complete response to the Office Action of May 3, 2005. Applicants respectfully request that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case. If the Examiner believes that there are any issues that can be resolved by a telephone conference, or that there are any informalities that can be corrected by an amendment, please call 404 815 6061.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. J. Turton', is written over a horizontal line.

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